

## PANAMA CANAL WRECK

ENGULFS MANY GREAT MEN OF FRANCE.

Brazen Theft Amounting to Over Sixty Millions—Machinery Valued at \$900,000,000 Rotting—Vegetation Covering the Intended Route—Thousands Starving.

## The Crisis in France.

The exposure of the corruption, mismanagement and stealing in Panama canal affairs has aroused the indignation of Frenchmen to a pitch that threatened to overthrow the government and replace republicanism with monarchy. The ministry was hurled from power unceremoniously, and those displaced deem themselves fortunate in escaping with this chastisement.

The scheme to build the isthmus canal called for so much capital that Frenchmen of all classes were appealed to for subscriptions. The small farmers and shopkeepers were enlisted and the response became national in character. The assurance from government officials that the enterprise would pay and that De Lesseps, who built the Suez canal, would repeat on a larger scale his success in uniting the waters of the

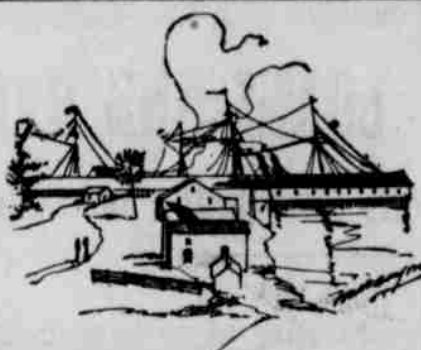


FERDINAND DE LESSEPS.

De Lesseps, who was once the idol of his nation, is now held in loathing, with none so poor as to do him reverence. The colossal failure of the canal is laid at his door and he is the most despised man in France to-day. The great engineer has been transformed into the greatest of swindlers and the most heartless of foes to the thousands who trusted him only to be ruined thereby.

## Irretrievable Ruin.

Now that the Panama Canal scheme has been proved to have been a



THE QUAY AT COLON.

gigantic swindle, the parallel of which may not be found in history, an inventory, as it were, of the work done on the canal has been made, and the result is alike astounding, scandalous and profoundly sad. Apart from the financial loss, which is enormous, and the corruption, alike shameful and monumental, there has been frightful loss of life, and even



A PANAMA RAILROAD.

Atlantic and Pacific in the center of this continent, was a bait that took exceedingly well. As a consequence francs by the hundred millions poured into the canal treasury until \$260,000,000, as Americans reckon money, was invested. To insure this result the Parisian and provincial press were paid \$4,000,000 to advocate the proposition. To make sure of the passage of the bill through the Chamber of

now thousands of misguided laborers are living on the isthmus, a prey to fever and sometimes starvation, hoping that the work will be resumed and that they may earn enough money for support or to take them back to their homes.

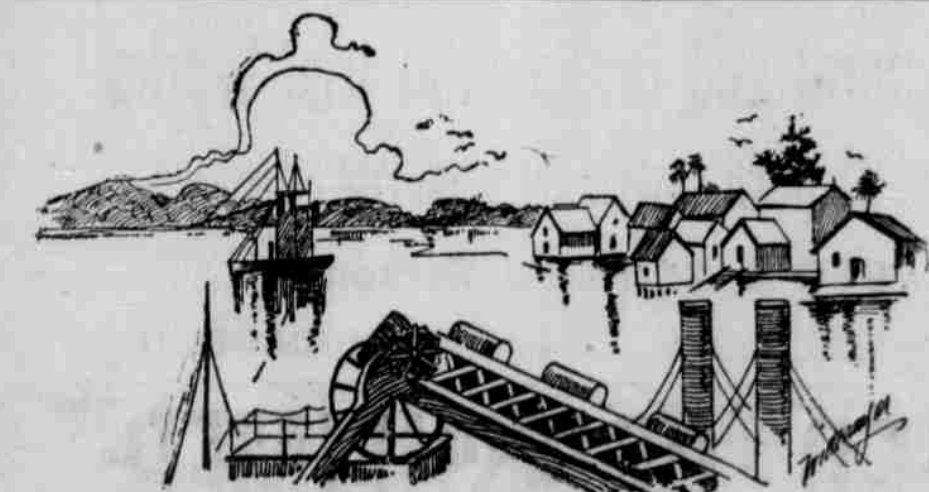
France expended 1,300,000,000 francs on the Panama Canal, and almost nothing remains to show for this vast expenditure. In the first flush of the canal scheme Panama was to become a new El Dorado, a place where money could be made as it was during the gold excitement in California and Australia. The tonnage of the world would pass through the canal. New towns with the French names and French inhabitants would grow along its route. Colon would blossom into vigorous life, and the ancient city of Panama would throw off its lethargy and become one of the foremost seaports of the world. Those were flush times on the isthmus, and the officials of the canal found leisure to lay out parks and gardens and plan great estates for themselves. Even the sleepy natives awoke. They began to dream of wealth and bustled around as if they did not live in the land of to-morrow. The merchants did a great business. The money-changers were never idle, and cash flowed from the canal treasury into a thousand channels. Everybody, if he only talked canal and believed canal, could get rich.

But now the inevitable crash has



DE LESSEPS' RESIDENCE AT COLON.

Deputies \$10,000,000 was given to the members who influenced legislation to that end. In addition some \$19,000,000 was used in advertising the scheme. In various ways some \$60,000,000 was squandered after this fashion. The balance, \$200,000,000, was spent on the construction of the canal, at least half being wasted by mismanagement. The abandonment



NEAR THE CITY DE LESSEPS.

of the project was decided only when there was no more money to expend, and this stoppage compelled De Lesseps and those associated with him to acknowledge the canal failure, with no hope of realizing a farthing for the tens of thousands who had invested the savings of a lifetime in the project.

The report shocked France, while it dazed the multitude who had been kept in ignorance of the progress of the enterprise, precipitated a panic on the Bourse and all Paris went wild over the confession. In the Chamber of Deputies the Government was scored unmercifully and the Ministry dismissed from power. Baron de Reinach, the leading banker after Rothschild in Paris, who lent his name to the scheme, was so overcome with remorse that he committed suicide. He was worth \$60,000,000, but this did not exempt him from the torture that drove him to self-destruction.

No desperate had popular feeling become that it would have required but little to convert the republic into a monarchy. The only argument that counted against it was that Frenchmen were swindled under the empire about as much as they had been under the republic, and that the anticipated change would not have benefited the oppressed. Consequently the most aggravated part of the crisis has been passed without recourse to such a doubtful measure. Yet Parisians admit that there were a number of people in the Chamber

come. The new towns have faded away. The parks and the gardens are abandoned and there is nothing but desolation. The property of the canal company is rusting and rotting in neglect. The machinery, dredges, cranes and other appliances are strewn in confusion from Colon to Panama. Many pieces have sunk deep in the



FERDINAND DE LESSEPS.

swamps, and others lie where they were tossed from the boats or the transverse cars, never having seen a mile of water. Several of these dredging machines cost more than \$100,000 apiece. An expert who recently visited Panama says that machinery, the cost of which was \$400,000,000, is rotting on the isthmus. It will never be moved. A large portion is already rusted and damaged.

posure that much of it could not be used even if work were resumed on the Panama Canal, which is no longer classed among the probabilities.

## Difficulties of Construction.

What is left of the canal? The answer to this question can be altered every year, for the condition of the work is deteriorating very rapidly. The cut was to have been from Colon, on the Atlantic coast, to Panama on the Pacific coast, a distance of fifty-four miles. Suez is eighty miles long, but the obstacles presented at Panama were immeasurably greater. In the Culebra cut and the hills of Mindi the elevation of the isthmus is 300 feet above the level of the sea, and the excavation in those places had to be made through the solid rock, too. And then came the obstacle of the Chagres River, which was practically insurmountable. The canal crosses and recrosses it.

Were it an ordinary, well-behaved river it might be easily managed. But it is a wild, wayward, untamed river, like the people of the country through which it flows. A heavy tropical rain comes, and it rises forty feet in twelve hours. What to do with so much water, for it flows into the canal as well, then becomes a problem that has vexed the best engineers in the world. The difficulty has been obviated partly by an intricate system of dams and locks, but no one can say whether it would have lasted or would have subdued the Chagres in its wildest moments.

The canal, as originally intended, would have been 30 feet deep, from 200 to 250 feet broad at the top, and about 100 feet broad at the bottom. On the Atlantic side are 18 or 20 miles of canal, dredged to a depth of 15 feet by the American Construction and Dredging Company, and there are partial excavations and lines traced by the French all the way to Panama.

At Colon, lying in the water, is a huge pile of grandiose blocks, 70,000 in number. They were brought from the West Indies at a total cost of about 8 cents a block. They were intended for banking up the canal, but were dumped off the ships into the water years ago, and have been lying there ever since, a monument to the recklessness and corruption of the Panama scheme.

The eighteen or twenty miles of partially completed canal will soon become nothing but a muddy ditch. The banks are caving in, and every time it rains huge masses of earth are washed into the canal. In a few years the canal, except where cut through the solid rock, will be filled up entirely by these heavy washings, and the vegetation will begin to grow again where the dredging machines tore it away.

## Beyond Reconstruction.

Remaining on the isthmus are many Europeans who still believe that the work will be resumed. But this is extremely improbable. Many calculations have been made as to the amount of money it would require to complete it. None fall under \$200,000,000. Some run as high as \$750,000,000, and a few go so far as to say that the canal cannot be built at all so that it will return a fair interest on the investment. But there is another difficulty. The concession from Colombia, under which the canal was to be built, expires next February, and even if the concession should be renewed, whence will come the capital needed for the prosecution of the work? The French people will give no more, and the capitalists of other countries are rather shy of Panama.

Thus far only the financial loss has been considered. But there is another question that appeals to humanity. Negro laborers are now on the isthmus a prey to disease. At one time there were 60,000 negroes at Colon. They led a careless, merry life, and saved not one cent from their earnings. When work ceased they were unable to return to their homes, and they are still on the isthmus, less the thousands who have perished. Some have become outlaws, and infest the localities on either side of the canal route.

In a short time the route of the canal will be covered with tropical vegetation, in which wild animals will make their lairs.

## Dangerous Jumping.

It is one thing to jump from a great height into open space such as that of the sea, and it is another thing to jump down one hundred and twenty feet into a well. The feat may be seen performed any day at Delhi in India. So proficient are the men and boys who leap down the distance, both into a tank from the top of a mosque and into a narrow well, that while descending they purposely sprawl about in the air and display queer antics; but the moment they near the water they suddenly straighten out their bodies, and plunge down, arrow-like, with scarcely a splash. A dozen men and boys can be got at any hour to perform this feat for the modest fee of about three pence a leap.

## Marriage.

The marriage ceremony practiced by the people of Morocco is said to be very short and simple. Bride and groom are brought out before the assembled crowd with great solemnity and seated side by side. A hotel is then cut in two by the midwife woman of the tribe, and one-half is given to the groom. They begin to chew the nut, and then the old woman, after some sort of incantation, smacks their heads together and they are declared man and wife.

## This is Probably a Trick.

Of course the "trick" is a trick, and that is the reason of the extreme interest in the feat, and that is the reason that it is so popular. A dish of singing birds at an expense of \$4.00.

## Let the Game Go.

In England women's dress is

## STARCH AND STARCHING.

The Flemish Woman by Whom They Were Introduced Into England.

Troy, the greatest laundry town in the world, will be especially interested, says the Times of that city, in an article on starch written by William Elliot Griffiths and published in the current number of Harper's Bazar. Mr. Griffiths informs us that it was Queen Elizabeth of England who introduced fashions that established the laundry on a permanent basis and created starch factories. She not only enlarged the ruff, multiplied undergarments, increased the lady's inventory and the bride's trousseau, but it was she who began the fashion of the farthingale or crinoline. This wheel-shaped arrangement puffed out the dress like a balloon, and right royal was the rustle of the stiffened skirts as the Queen and her ladies moved about. So great was the demand for starch to stiffen properly the ruffs, collars, cuffs, and crinoline that it seriously affected the price of wheat. Complaints were loud and long that bread was being taken out of the mouths of the people. The potato was then unknown or too much of a novelty. Its virtues and potencies of supply to the laundress and the alleged sugar-maker were then unsuspected. To whom were the English and their doughty Queen indebted for this wonderful addition to the resources of civilization and of personal neatness? It is not their own invention, but the gift of the Low Countries. It came in with carriages, which also were imported, to the amazement of the common folk. Elizabeth was unable to monopolize starched ruffs, for presently the gentlewomen of England began to send their daughters and nearest kinswomen to Mrs. Dinghen to learn how to starch. Would the reader know who Mrs. Dinghen was—the who first made English ladies so fine and British housemaids so neat? We bless the memory of Mrs. Dinghen every time we are daintily served in an English home. The daughter of a knight of Flanders, and driven out by Spanish oppression, she with her husband found refuge in London. Being probably penniless, she so turned her hand that the pounds soon flowed in. While Mrs. Boonen starched for the Queen, Mrs. Dinghen starched for the ladies. Her price was £5 for teaching how to starch, but £20 for showing "how to seeth starch." In a little time she got an estate, being greatly encouraged by gentlemen and ladies. She was "the first to teach starching in those days of impurity," adds the historian, with pathos and appreciation of the previous facts. "Blessings on Mrs. Dinghen van den Plasse!" says Mr. Griffiths. And every Troy laundress responds "Amen!"

## HERE'S WISDOM.

Some Startling Discoveries Made by Girls in Domestic Economy.

The following notes on domestic economy are selected from the answers given at a recent examination of girls between twelve and sixteen years of age:

"Cheese is as wholesome as 8½ pounds of beef. Beef is a useful article of food, obtained from different animals, such as the cow, sheep, pig, etc.—the lean of beef belongs to the animal kingdom, and the fat to the vegetable kingdom. Butter is good for the brain. Milk is called a solid food because it models the form of the child. Without eating potatoes we would become very delicate, because potatoes are very necessary to sustain human life. Stewing is very different from boiling; when we want a nice dinner we stew a roast of beef. Pot-au-feu is mashed-up meat. Cretins are generally served with green-pea soup. If a man lives without food for a considerable time, say sixty days, he will die at the end of a month; or, if the constitution is delicate, he may only live for a week, or less. The body wastes away by the continual working of the bones together, and as this process goes on every day, the bones get thinner and smaller. Carbonaceous foods give the bones the elasticity of which they consist.

"Lawn is a soft stuff made from the wool of the lawn, an animal in South America. It is also part of the flesh of the cow or sheep, the rib part. Shoddy is a drink made from a mixture of ale and sugar. It is the leather before it goes through the process of making into boots and shoes, and for this reason is called shoddy. It is the flesh near the foot of any animal. It is a kind of whisky. Winey is the wool off an animal which lives in America; the lamen is its name. Calico is a good heat conductor, because it catches fire very easily. If a print dress is dried outside, it must be careful not to be left in the sun. Calendered means turned from one kind of species into another. It is things which are the shape of a calendar, like our bodies. It means preserved with sugar. It means taking the dirt out of water. It means increased or getting heavier. It is a medicine or drug. It is boiling anything by means of steam. It means chewing the food well to make it fit to enter the body.

## How the Blacksnake Fights.

"You wouldn't believe me," said old Jacob Bloom, of Laurel Run, to a gang of woodmen the other day, "you wouldn't believe me if I'd tell you the blacksnake is less among snakes in this country, but it's a fact. A blacksnake will whip any other kind of a snake you can find out and out half try."

Some of the boys laughed and said they didn't think a blacksnake would be in it with a rattlesnake at all. There was a large rattlesnake in the camp which the woodmen kept in a box with a glass cover on it to

themselves with after working hours.

Jim Brewer, of this place, who happened to be there at the time and heard Mr. Bloom's observations, chipped in and said:

"I'll bet a blacksnake would not last long if you'd put him in the box with that rattler."

"Wouldn't!" exclaimed Bloom. "Why, he'd choke the rattler to death before he knew what happened to him, an' in order to convince you of the fact I'll go out an' capture a blacksnake and show you."

The subject was then dropped and the boys forgot it, but about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the old man came in with a blacksnake a little over three feet long. The rattler was nearly two feet longer.

"Now," he says, "I'll show you how it's done."

And he put the blacksnake into the box with the rattler.

Both snakes seemed to be considerably agitated. The rattler shook his tail with an angry whizz, and stuck out his tongue in a menacing way, and the blacksnake squirmed around and made several feints with his tail. The rattler was angry and coiled himself to strike, but before he was quite ready the blacksnake had taken a hitch around the rattler's neck with his tail and began to haul taut. The rattler writhed and squirmed and thumped himself around, but all to no purpose. The blacksnake kept his hold and drew tighter. Finally the contortions of the rattler ceased. He was dead. The blacksnake held on five minutes longer, then calmly unfolded his tail and curled himself up in a corner of the box.

"There!" said the old man, triumphantly. "Hereafter when I tell you anything about snakes you can put it down as fact."—Punxsutawney Spirit.

## Ortolans.

Perhaps the greatest refinement in fattening is exhibited in the manner of feeding ortolans. The ortolan is a small bird, esteemed a great delicacy by Italians. It is the fat of this bird which is so delicious; but it has a peculiar habit of feeding, which is opposed to its rapid fattening—that is, that it feeds only at the rising of the sun. Yet this peculiarity has not proved an insurmountable obstacle to the Italian gourmards.

The ortolans are placed in a warm chamber, perfectly dark, with only one aperture in the wall. Their food is scattered over the floor of the chamber.

At a certain hour in the morning the keeper of the birds places a lantern in the orifice of the wall; the dim light thrown by the lantern on the floor of the apartment induces the ortolans to believe that the sun is about to rise, and they greedily consume the food upon the floor. More food is now scattered over it, and the lantern is withdrawn.

The ortolans, rather surprised at the shortness of the day, think it their duty to fall asleep, as night has spread his sable mantle round them. During sleep, little of the food being expended in the production of force, most of it goes to the formation of muscle and fat.

After they have been allowed to repose for one or two hours, in order to complete the digestion of the food taken, their keeper again exhibits the lantern through the aperture.

The rising sun a second time illuminates the apartment; and the birds, awaking from their slumber, apply themselves voraciously to the food on the floor; after having discussed which, they are again enveloped in darkness. Thus the sun is made to shed its rising rays into the chamber four or five times every day, and as many nights follow its transitory beams. The ortolans, thus treated, become little balls of fat in a few days.

## The Size of Alligators.

I have seen numerous specimens of our saurian no longer than an ordinary lead pencil, says a writer in the Century; this was in the season of their hatching. I have also seen a few living specimens about sixteen feet in length. In the summer of 1875 I obtained from the late Edingham Lawrence, member of Congress and Commissioner from Louisiana to the Centennial Exhibition, the dried skin of an alligator which, after at least fifteen inches had been cut from the end of the tail, still measured seventeen feet ten inches in length. Allowing more than six inches by shrinkage in drying, this monster of his kind, alive, must have measured more than twenty feet. He was killed in the lower part of Bayou Lafourche.

Probably the largest alligator ever seen in Louisiana was killed in a small lake on the plantation of H. J. Feltus, in Concordia Parish. According to the statement of Mr. Feltus, now of Baton Rouge, this specimen measured twenty-two feet in length. The great reptile had long been famous for miles around, having destroyed numbers of hogs and hounds owned in the neighborhood of his retreat. He had become so wary, from the number of ineffectual shots fired at him, as to be almost unapproachable. Finally he fell a victim to a long shot fired from a Mississippi rifle in the hands of Mr. Feltus, who had persevered in hunting him, having been the greatest loser by his depredations. The huge carcass of this reptile was towed to the bank by a boat. It required the strength of a pair of mules and a stout rope to haul it ashore, where the measurement was made with the result noted above.

## Immigration to Australia.

The Australian colonies have expended about \$4,000,000 in promoting immigration.

## Insane Hens.

Burlington, N. H., has a hen that has been declared insane.

## FOLDING STEPLADDER.

A Handy Contrivance for Those Pressed for Room.

The accompanying cut represents a recent French invention in the shape of a folding stepladder which



CONVENIENT STEPLADDER.

appeals at once to the housekeeper in flats and apartments where she is often pressed for room. Two iron rods on either side move vertically in such a manner that the steps fold alongside of them, and the side arms lock closely against each other. For library use these ladders are very valuable, for when folded up they are not more than one-fourth of an inch thick, all told. They are constructed of light, yet firm, material, and can be easily placed behind any piece of furniture and kept out of the way.

## The Sultan of Johore.

A little party of Americans have paid a visit to the Sultan of Johore, and one of their number has given an account of their expedition from Singapore, which presents some picturesque details. The hospitable Sultan sent out his state barge, manned with Malays in canary-colored suits, to meet them, and at the landing pier they were received by "the illustrious Secretary of the Sultan," whose title and name are "Dato (Lord) Abdur Rahman."

He is a Commander of the English Order of St. George and St. Michael, and is stated to speak Malay, Chinese, English, French and German with equal fluency. The Sultan, who is said to have inherited the million day from the late Sultana "a million and a half of this world's goods," appears from this narrative to be a prosperous person. The hall, approached by a marble reception-room, in which the company were entertained at a banquet, is described as 150 feet in length.

Every article of the service for seventy persons and sixteen courses was of gold, and one course was served on "the celebrated Ellenborough plate." At the table the Sultan remarked: "We are all temperance folk in this Mohammedan country. See, all I drink is pineapple juice."

His guests gazed about the table and found that the foreigners were the only persons who were drinking wines provided for them. It is a noteworthy fact that the subjects of this Malay Sultan, of the Sultan State, are principally Chinese. They are, it is stated, allowed to come to Johore and settle on the best pieces of land they can find unoccupied.

## Had a Joke on the Lawyer.

When Cardinal Gibbons was bishop of Richmond, Va., he happened to be the defendant in relation to some church property. When called to the witness stand the plaintiff's lawyer, a distinguished legal luminary, after vain endeavors to involve the witness in contradictions, struck upon a plan which he thought would annoy the bishop. He thereupon questioned the right of Dr. Gibbons to the title of Bishop of Richmond, and called on him to prove his claim to the office. The defendant's counsel, of course, objected to this as irrelevant; but the bishop, with a quiet smile, said he would comply with the request if allowed half an hour to produce the necessary papers. This being allowed, the bishop left the court-room and returned in twenty minutes with a document which he proceeded to read with great solemnity, all the more solemn as the paper was in Latin. The plaintiff's lawyer pretended to take notes, industriously bowing his head once in awhile as if in acquiescence, and seeming perfectly convinced at the end.

When the reading was finished he announced that the papal bulls just read were perfectly satisfactory, at the same time apologizing for his expressed doubts. The next day, says the Halifax (N. S.) Mail, it leaked out that the bishop, unable to find the papal bull at his residence, had brought to the court and read a Latin essay on "Pope Leo the Great," written by an ecclesiastical student and forwarded by the President of the college as a specimen of the young man's skill in Latin composition. The smart lawyer never heard the last of it.

## Oil of Neroli.

By distillation with water, orange-flowers afford an essential oil, the essence or oil of neroli; and the water from which this is separated is sold as orange-flower water. The oil received its name from having been used in the seventeenth century by Anne Marie, wife of the Prince of Neroli or Neroli, as a perfume for her gloves. It possesses in a concentrated degree the fragrance of the flowers, and is much used in perfumes of various kinds. Orange-flower water is used in pharmacy in flavor mixtures, and sometimes in cooking.

## A Little Bit.

There is a bait at Reppner, Ore., which is claimed to weigh less than a pound.